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EXCAVATIONS ON THE SITE OF THE ANCIENT TOWN OF ALESIA¹

Probably few students of our classical heritage would contradict the assertion that Julius Caesar, by subjugating Gaul, laid the corner-stone of modern European history and that almost every great movement since that event has been influenced by this, his most memorable achievement. It is no less obvious that the supreme moment in this great drama was the encounter of the Romans and the Gauls before Alesia, when Vercingetorix and the Gallic hosts were crushed in their last great effort in defense of freedom. So important was this struggle that Alesia deserves a place with Marathon and Salamis among the sites of the world's most decisive battles.

Investigation since the first part of the nineteenth century has established beyond reasonable doubt the identity of the situation of Alesia as on the plateau of Mont-Auxois, about thirty-two miles northwest of Dijon, in the Côte d'Or region of Burgundy, the highland zone which separates the basin of the Saône from that of the Yonne and the Seine.

The very name of the village which is situated on the southwestern slope of the plateau of Mont-Auxois, Alise Sainte-Reine, was presumptive evidence that the site of Alesia was nearby, since it recalled the designation of the ancient town. The natural features of Mont-Auxois and its vicinity accord perfectly with Caesar's terse description of the situation of Alesia, so far as this goes. Furthermore, a stone inscription, found on the plateau in 1839 and preserved in the municipal museum of Alise Sainte-Reine, starts with the words *Martialis Dannotali*, 'Martialis, son of Dannotalus', and terminates with the expression, *IN ALISIA*, although the rest of the text is in Gallic².

Two lead tokens, inscribed, respectively, *ALS* and *ALSENS*, were formerly in the same museum, but they have, unfortunately, disappeared.

From *Alesia*, or *Alisia* was derived the proper adjective *Alisiensis*, which became in popular speech *Alsenis* and *Alsisis*, and finally, in French, *Aussois*. Although the form *Aussois*, with double *s*, corresponds

to the local pronunciation of the name of the hill and the region of Alesia, the form *Aussois* is commonly found on maps. The spelling *Aussois* is used in the *Guide du Visiteur à Alesia* referred to in note 2, above. Two bronze *paterae* found in the vicinity are inscribed with the word *Alisanos*, which may be the name of the protecting deity of the plateau.

But the final evidence for the identity of the site is the impression left in the soil of the surrounding valleys and hills of earthworks that can be explained only by reference to the culminating operations of Caesar's Gallic enterprise. The excavations carried out around the plateau of Mont-Auxois by order of Napoleon III from 1861 to 1865, and directed from 1862 by Captain Stoffel, brought to light, as is well known, important traces of Caesar's double system of trenches surrounding Alesia, designed both to repel the sallies of the besieged from the town and the possible attack of a relieving army from without. The publication of the plan of these works in the *Histoire de Jules César* by Napoleon III and the reproduction of it in almost all Latin school textbooks containing this part of Caesar's Commentaries on the Gallic War have made the general topographical features of the locality a matter of common knowledge. Unless new evidence of an unexpected kind should appear, further discussion of the military significance of the topography of the place could add little to our comprehension of the celebrated operations that have made it so justly famous.

We are concerned at present with less sensational features of the history of the region, but yet with material of considerable human importance, the evidence afforded by recent excavations concerning the life and the appearance of the town of Alesia in the Gallic and the Gallo-Roman periods.

Before we examine the results of these investigations let us recall briefly the general physical character of the locality. Caesar describes the situation of Alesia as follows (*De Bello Gallico* 7.69.1-4):

Ipsium erat oppidum Alesia in colle summo, admodum edito loco, ut nisi obsidione expugnari non posse videretur, cuius collis radices duo duabus ex partibus flumina sublebant. Ante id oppidum planities circiter milia III in longitudinem patebat; reliquis ex omnibus partibus colles mediocri interiecto spatio pari altitudinis fastigio oppidum cingebant.

The surface of the plateau of Mont-Auxois has a length of about a mile and a quarter, in a direction from somewhat north of west to somewhat south of east, and a width, in the broadest part, of about half a mile. It has a generally elliptical outline except for a recess curving deeply into its southwestern margin, where the

¹This paper was read at the Twenty-seventh Annual Meeting of The Classical Association of the Atlantic States, held at College Misericordia, Villa St. Teresa, Dallas, Pennsylvania, May 4-5, 1934.

²A photograph of this inscription is reproduced in the *Guide du Visiteur à Alesia*, published under the auspices of the Société des Sciences Historiques et Naturelles de Semur (Paris, Librairie Ernest Leroux, 1931). The inscription is given in *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* 13.2886. The complete text, so far as it can be represented in ordinary type, is as follows: *Martialis Dannotali ieuu ucute sosin celicon etic gobedbi dugiontio Ucuetin in Alisia*. The general sense seems to be that Martialis, son of Dannotalus, built this lofty building for the god Ucuētis and for the bronze workers in Alesia.

greater part of the village of Alise Sainte-Reine occupies a natural, more or less sloping, terrace below the summit. The plateau rises about 160 meters above the adjacent valleys. West of it, the level Plaine des Laumes extends about three miles from north to south, as is indicated by Caesar, and two miles east and west. Small streams, the Oze and Ozerain, flowing westward through narrow valleys, confine Mont-Auxois on the north and the south respectively, and empty into the Brenne, which crosses the Plaine des Laumes in a generally northwesterly direction. The Brenne empties into the Armançon, which unites with the Yonne, and that in turn with the Seine. The Oze, Ozerain, and Brenne together enclose Mont-Auxois throughout about nine-tenths of its circuit. Only on the southeast is the plateau connected by a ridge of lesser altitude with one of the outlying hills of similar height, Mont Pennevel. In all directions, beyond this southeasterly connecting ridge, beyond the valleys of the Oze and the Ozerain on the north and on the south, and beyond the Plaine des Laumes on the west, Mont-Auxois is encircled by elevations corresponding roughly in altitude to its own height. The Montagne de Flavigny confronts Alesia on the south; Mont Réa, scene of the most desperate fighting between the Romans and the Gauls, dominates the Plaine des Laumes on the north; and the Montagne de Bussy bounds the landscape on the northeast. The main line of the P. L. and M. Railway (Chemin de Fer de Paris à Lyon et à la Méditerranée) in its course from Paris to Dijon ascends the valley of the Oze at the foot of Mont-Auxois on the north. Many travellers passing in the trains identify the situation of Alesia by the fleeting view of the impressive bronze statue of Vercingetorix which was erected in 1865, in a slightly position on the western extremity of the plateau. The station nearest to the site of Alesia is Les Laumes-Alesia, in the northern part of the Plaine des Laumes.

Caesar (*De Bello Gallico* 7.68.1) says that Alesia was a town of the Mandubii. The Mandubii appear to have been a client state of the Aedui, and were situated on the northeastern border of the Aeduan territory. Diodorus Siculus (4.19.1-2) says that Hercules, after his expedition to Spain, penetrated Gaul and founded Alesia. Diodorus represents Alesia as in his time a sort of metropolis of all Gaul, a fantastic notion, of course, although, as will be explained later, the Gauls probably regarded the place with peculiar religious veneration. From Pliny the Elder (*Naturalis Historia* 34.162) we learn that Alesia was in his time an important center for the silver-plating industry³. Strabo (4.2.3), Dio Cassius (40.39.3), and Plutarch (*Caesar* 27) mention Alesia, but their information seems to have been de-

rived from Caesar's Commentaries and so to have no independent value.

The literary evidence, though scanty, the inscriptions, though few in number, and the survival of the name Alesia in the name Alise Sainte-Reine sufficed to show that the town outlived the Roman conquest and continued to exist on the same spot, in contrast with Bibracte and Gergovia, in whose stead new urban and political centers were created, Augustodunum (Autun) and Augustonemetum (Clermont-Ferrand) respectively, in more easily accessible places. Alesia had probably been the capital of a Gallic tribe, the Mandubii, in the period of Gallic independence, but it must have lost this distinction after the Roman conquest, when the Mandubii as a separate community disappeared from history. If the Mandubii were annexed to the Aedui, as seems very likely, Alesia was doubtless reduced to the rank of administrative center of an Aeduan *pagus* or canton, under a delegate of the government at Augustodunum⁴.

Florus (1.45) says that Caesar, after taking possession of Alesia, burned it, but Florus in this part of his history has obviously so confused Alesia and Gergovia that his statement has no positive value. The impression obtained by an examination of the remains of Alesia thus far excavated is that, whatever personal calamity the inhabitants of Alesia may have suffered at the time of the siege and the occupation of the place by the Roman army, the existence of the town in a physical sense underwent no interruption.

Excavations of very limited extent were made at Alesia by Maillard de Chambure in 1812, 1821, 1822, 1836, and 1839. These brought to light, among other things, the Celtic inscription with the words IN ALISIA, already mentioned (see note 2, above), in the locality on the surface of the plateau known as the Cimetière Saint-Père, and the vestiges of a temple at the eastern extremity of the hill, at a place called La Croix de Saint-Charles. In 1898, Monsieur Victor Pernet, who had assisted Captain Stoffel in 1861-1865, discovered near the latter spot the only spring of water on the surface of the plateau.

In 1905 the Société des Sciences Historiques et Naturelles de Semur⁵ resolved to undertake the systematic excavation of the ancient site on the plateau of Mont-Auxois. In order to enlist support for this undertaking a congress of archaeologists, historians, and others interested in the national antiquities was convoked at Alise Sainte-Reine, on September 18, 1905. In the course of a stirring address to this congress M. Salomon Reinach declared:

Il n'y a au monde qu'un seul plateau d'Alesia, comme il n'y a qu'un seul Forum Romain, une Ile de Delos; les enseignements que ces lieux privilégiés peuvent fournir

³The passage reads as follows: *Album incoquitur aereis operibus Galliarum invento ita ut vix discerni possit ab argento, eaque incoctilia appellant. Deinde et argentum incoquere simili modo coepere eorum maxime ornamentis iumentorumque ac iugorum Alesia oppido: reliqua gloria Biturum fuit.* This Messrs. John Bostock and H. T. Riley (in their translation of Pliny, in the Bohn Classical Library, 1857: see 6.215) render rather freely, as follows: "... It was in the Gallic provinces that the method was discovered of coating articles of copper with white lead, so as to be scarcely distinguishable from silver: articles thus plated are known as 'incoctilia.' At a later period the people of the town of Alesia began to use a similar process for plating articles with silver, more particularly ornaments for horses, beasts of burden, and yokes of oxen: the merit, however, of this invention belongs to the Bituriges...."

⁴The fact that at the beginning of the Middle Ages Alesia was under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Bishops of Autun points to its having formed part of the Aeduan territory under the Roman Empire, since the episcopal sees, developing at the political centers of the different tribes or states of Gaul, had territorial circumscriptions corresponding to the territories of those political divisions.

⁵Semur-en-Auxois, a town of about 3700 inhabitants, is celebrated for its picturesque situation on a lofty promontory in a bend of the Armançon River, fourteen kilometers west of Les Laumes-Alesia, in the direction of Avallon, and for its quaint, medieval appearance.

à l'archéologie et à l'histoire doivent être recueillis sans qu'il s'en perd un seul.

On the next day a Commission des Fouilles was formed to undertake operations. The results obtained in the very limited and desultory excavations that had already been made served as useful indications to direct the attention of the Commission to the parts of the plateau where excavations were likely to be most productive of results. Operations during the Autumn of 1905 were confined to trial trenches and borings to point the way for later work. The first real campaign of excavation was inaugurated on May 7, 1906. From that time until the outbreak of the World War in 1914 operations were carried on every year during the period of favorable weather conditions. Resumed, after the World War, in 1922, they have continued to the present time. In 1906-1907 the enterprise was directed by Major Émile Espérandieu, with M. Victor Pernet actually supervising the operations. M. Pernet had exclusive charge as director from 1908 until 1922, when he was succeeded by M. Jules Toutain, who is at present Professor at the École des Hautes Études at the Sorbonne, and President of the Société des Sciences de Semur. I am indebted to his generous courtesy for a very large part of the information contained in the present paper⁶.

Besides the excavations conducted under the Société des Sciences de Semur, Major Espérandieu, who is a member of the French Institute, and Dr. Epery, a former Mayor of Alise Sainte-Reine, from 1909 to 1912, and again from 1932, carried on separate excavations at different points on the plateau, chiefly at its eastern extremity. Both undertakings receive support from the French Government.

The Musée Municipal of Alise Sainte-Reine was established under the auspices of Napoleon III, in 1862, for the preservation of archaeological material from the vicinity which had accumulated or which might be found in the course of later excavations. The most important object in it to-day is, probably, the stone inscription already mentioned as containing the expression IN ALISIA (see note 2, above). The Société des Sciences acquired and remodelled a former hotel in Alise Sainte-Reine and established in it the Musée Alesia in 1910. This Museum contains without exception all objects found in the course of the excavations of the Société des Sciences de Semur that have been removed from the site of Alesia⁷.

Some remarks about the general features of the life and activity of Alesia, remarks based on the results of the excavations, may be in order, before we proceed to a more detailed examination of the existing remains of the town as now laid bare. In different parts of the area investigated there have been found small hard terra cotta crucibles, whole or fragmentary, the outside surfaces of which, in some cases, show traces of the metals that had been melted in them (copper, tin, or iron), likewise remains of potters' furnaces, and many de-

posits of partly carved bones of animals. All these finds corroborate the impression given by the words of Pliny the Elder (34.162: cited above), that Alesia was an industrial center. The discoveries in fact prove that many different articles of metal, terra cotta, and bone were made at Alesia.

Hills in the neighborhood could supply the necessary potter's clay, and iron ore was found in not very distant parts of Gaul. But the tin for making bronze had to be brought from Britain, and its transportation suggests the question of Alesia's communications. Alesia, although not situated on one of the great Roman highways that traversed Gaul, was not very far from the main road connecting the Channel ports with the Rhone valley and with Italy. This road, starting from Gesoriacum (Boulogne), passed through Samarobriua (Amiens), Casoramagus (Beauvais), Calagum (Coulommiers), to Agedincum (Sens), where it was joined by the road coming from Lutetia (Paris) via Meclosedum (Melun), and continued through Autessiodurum (Auxerre), Aballo (Avallon), Sidolocus (Saulieu), Augustodunum (Autun), and Cabillio (Chalon-sur-Saône), to Lugudunum (Lyon). From Alesia a connecting road probably reached this great highway at Sidolocus (Saulieu), as is the case to-day with its modern counterpart, Route Nationale 6⁸.

Allusion has been made to the spring at the eastern extremity of Mont-Auxois as the only source of running water on the plateau. The situation of Alesia must have rendered practically impossible the provision of a water supply by means of an aqueduct. The inhabitants must have depended very largely on wells, of which a great many have been discovered, including two with a depth of twenty-seven meters, and another with a depth of twenty-five meters. The débris found in some of these wells contained many objects of artistic and archaeological value. Some of them will be mentioned later.

At an early stage of the operations it became evident that the soil of Mont-Auxois concealed remains of both the Gallic and the Gallo-Roman periods, and that, under the Empire, Alesia had only in part assumed the character and the appearance of a Roman provincial town, although it possessed temples, porticoes, dwellings, and a theater in the Italian manner of the time. In some cases these buildings of the imperial age covered vestiges of habitations of the earlier period, while some parts of the town retained altogether the primitive character of the age before the Roman conquest.

A local road, called on the map of the excavations Grande Voie du Mont-Auxois, starts from the principal street of Alise Sainte-Reine a short distance northwest of the Parish Church, ascends in a northeasterly direction to the surface of the plateau, and then, bending to the right, or southeastward, continues along the top of the plateau to its eastern extremity. At a distance of about 100 meters from the point where this road leaves the village street, on the left hand side, opposite the present village cemetery, there is the entrance to an area known as "En Curiot"; this is situated on the

⁶I visited the excavations of Alesia in 1906 and 1933, and again, subsequently to the reading of this paper at Dallas, in 1934.

⁷Notwithstanding the existence of the two museums at Alise Sainte-Reine, a large part of the material discovered at the time of the excavations under Napoleon III as well as recently in the excavations of Major Espérandieu and Dr. Epery has been taken to the Museum of St. Germain.

⁸See Konrad Miller, *Itineraria Romana*, 90-94. Strecke 14. Von (Boulogne) Therouanne und von da nach Dax und Nordspanien (Stuttgart, Strecker und Schröder, 1916).

upper part of the slope, where the excavations of 1910 and 1912 brought to light the largest group of remains of primitive Gallic habitations, about forty in an acre and a quarter. These consist of cavities cut in the solid rock of the hill.

Excavations elsewhere had shown that Gallic habitations often consisted, wholly or in part, of chambers sunk in the rock. In the quarter of Alesia referred to in the preceding paragraph the cavities vary in depth from somewhat less than a meter to somewhat more than two meters, so that in many cases they were evidently too shallow to represent the entire height of an abode. Some sort of construction, probably of branches or reeds covered with clay, circular or rectangular, must in these cases at least have been erected over the rock-hewn chambers.

In most instances a habitation had but one rock-hewn chamber. Sometimes there were two, but in only one case were there three. Originally the walls and stairs were left rough as hewn from the rock. Later they were often faced with dressed stone masonry, which gave them a neater appearance. Although these dwellings illustrate the living conditions at Alesia before the coming of the Romans, the discovery in such dwellings of coins of Claudius, Nero, and even some of the later Emperors shows that such dwellings continued in use under the Empire, when they must have contrasted strangely with buildings in the formal Italian style in the nearby heart of the town.

This latter area, the most important area of excavation on the whole surface of the plateau, is reached by an entrance at the custodian's hut on the left of the Grande Voie du Mont-Aussois, about 250 meters beyond the entrance to the area just described, "En Curiot". It should be explained in general that the present level of the plateau, except where undulations or declivities produce exceptional conditions, is usually from one to two meters above the ancient level, and that, for the most part, the remains of ancient buildings are found rising to a height just below the reach of the plow.

One crosses first a small area adjacent to the road, an area known as the Cimetière Saint-Père³, because it was used as a medieval burying place, as will be explained later. In this one section fourteen wells were discovered in the excavations of 1909. Most of them appeared to have been filled up in the third century A. D.

About seventy meters north of the entrance we come upon the remains of the theater. This is the westernmost of a group of public buildings extending generally from west to east in the central part of the town. The *cavea* of this theater faces westward. The diameter of the semicircle bounding it on the outside measures 81.75 meters. From coins discovered in its foundations, this theater is believed to have been built under Augustus. If this supposition is correct, the erection at that time of a theater of such magnitude is striking evidence of the rapid progress of Roman culture among the popu-

lation. The enclosing wall on the outside of the *cavea* is about a meter thick. An unusual feature is a number of short walls extending outward from this semicircular enclosing wall. The most probable explanation of this feature is that these radiating walls were intended as buttresses to support the outer wall of the *cavea*. Although they are short, if they are regarded as walls, they would make unusually deep buttresses, and, since the thrust-resisting capacity of a buttress increases with its depth, that is the length of its axis perpendicular to the wall which it supports, these would have been very effective buttresses. The builders of the theater took advantage of the natural contour of the ground, which slopes westward toward the position selected for the stage. The lack of any remains of masonry substructures in the space occupied by the *cavea* we can explain by supposing that the seats rested on an earth filling with the required concave curving surface. With a *cavea* formed in this way, a very effective system of buttressing would have been necessary to counteract the pressure of the great mass of earth against the enclosing wall.

Close to the theater on the east, but with east and west axis further north and inclined somewhat more toward the southeast, are the remains of a sanctuary consisting of a rectangular temple in the center of a nearly square open area or court, enclosed by porticoes on the north, west, and south, and by the so-called Monument à Trois Absides (to be described presently) on the east. The remains of all this, it must be confessed, are meager, but they suffice to indicate plainly the plan. The temple itself corresponded in arrangement to the celebrated Maison Carrée at Nîmes, although of course it was very much smaller. It faced the East. There are indications of a stairway leading from the court to the portico. A mass of masonry in front of this stairway probably represents the altar. The discovery nearby of a bas-relief about 50 centimeters high, on which is a representation of the Capitoline Triad, supports the conjecture that the shrine was dedicated to Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva, and was regarded as the local Capitoline Temple.

Conterminous with this precinct on the east, and identical with it in orientation, was a rectangular building, corresponding to the width of the temple court in its north and south extension, but relatively quite narrow east and west (its foundations are very clearly defined). Semicircular apses terminate its short ends north and south, while at the center of the west side there is an extension at right angles to the longitudinal axis of the building, enclosed by straight walls on the north and the south, but by a convex curving wall on the west, which gives the structure a third apse that projects into the court of the Capitoline Temple. The building here described is called the Monument à Trois Absides. It probably served as the *basilica*, or seat of justice. Seven doorways, decorated with white and gray marble, opened in the eastern, or main, façade; they communicated with a court which was probably surrounded by porticoes.

East of the basilica court, a large open area, measuring about 40 by 100 meters, with its long axis running

³Père is the local dialectic equivalent for *Pierre*, or *Peter*. The cemetery depended in the Middle Ages on the Abbey at Flavigny, which was dedicated to St. Peter, after having been dedicated first to Saint Préjet.

east and west, is believed to have been the forum. Here the remains of several pavements have been found at different levels. The area seems to have been bordered by rows of columns on the north and the south and by square pillars on the east. The excavations on this site have been filled up, and the whole space has been restored to cultivation.

The supposed Capital, *basilica*, and forum constitute a continuous group with the same orientation. They seem to have been deliberately planned at one time as a monumental combination of public buildings for the center of the town. In a modest way this group of structures along a common axial line recalls the combination of buildings of like purpose in Trajan's monumental group at Rome.

A short distance northeast of the Monument à Trois Apstides, or *basilica*, the excavations of 1907-1908 uncovered the remains of an extensive rectangular structure on the north side of an ancient street, which, in its westward course, must have passed north of the theater. Bases of columns in two close, parallel rows indicate the position of a portico with double colonnade forming the front of this building on the east and west street. From the size and the central position of this building and the remains of a hypocaust found in it, the structure is believed to have been a bathing establishment (*thermae*). The block was continued westward by a building with a single colonnade on the street; the bases of eight columns of this colonnade have been found.

In a well-preserved ancient cellar, about ten meters east of the *thermae*, was found, at the foot of a niche in the wall, a statuette of a seated mother goddess (Mater), about 50 centimeters high. The figure is crowned with a diadem, and is clad in a long robe fastened over the shoulders. The left hand holds a fold of the robe in which are a dozen fruits of different sizes.

Just east of this cellar, across a narrow side street, is the most interesting building that the excavations of Alesia have thus far brought to light. This, known as the Monument à Crypte, is a rectangular structure. The southern part of it is a compact block, the northern an open court, enclosed on the east, south, and west by porticoes, which, it is believed, were two stories high.

The southern part of this building, which forms a compact block, is divided into two parts by a narrow space between parallel walls running north and south. This space is occupied by a corridor both at the ground level and at the level of the cellar below. A stairway starting in the south portico in the direction of its longitudinal axis eastward turned in its course at right angles and descended to the cellar corridor, which communicated through a round-arched doorway with the crypt, or cellar apartment, occupying the western part of the main block of the building. This well-constructed doorway, 1.60 meters in width by 2.70 in height to the apex of its arched opening, and a considerable part of the wall at the side of it and higher up are in an excellent state of preservation. The sides of the crypt are formed of the natural rock below, of regular masonry above. Remains of mural painting, found on these walls, are preserved in the Musée Alesia. Some of the objects found in this crypt showed signs of fire. A bronze vase

was found here with an inscription around its rim mentioning the names of the two deities, Ucuētis and Bergusia, to whose worship the building was probably consecrated¹⁰. It has been suggested that Ucuētis was the patron divinity of the bronze workers at Alesia, inasmuch as the Celtic traditions of Ireland mention a legendary smith named Ughden.

The eastern part of the main block of this building contains a rectangular apartment with a doorway opening upon the south portico of the court. The doorway is framed in massive long blocks of stone, regularly cut and set on end.

The existing remains of the porticoes belong almost wholly to the ground story, which was formed of square pillars with capitals of curious design. Some of these pillars with their capitals have been reerected in their original positions. There are two deep wells in the court.

The area between the forum and the Grande Voie du Mont-Aussois revealed vestiges of private houses. Here too was found a well twenty-seven meters deep, which contained a wooden pail with metal hoops, said to date from the third century, and a wooden 'flute of Pan', the only example of a musical instrument of this kind preserved from antiquity. These and other objects of archaeological interest that were discovered in 1906 are in the Musée Alesia.

Important finds were made in a site about 200 meters southeast of the approximate center of the forum, and fifty meters south of the modern road, in an area known as "En Surelot". Here were the remains of a large house with a hypocaust, and another well twenty-seven meters deep, and, adjoining this, a rectangular hall or apartment, measuring 5 by 17 meters, whose longer axis runs roughly north and south. The southern part of the interior of the structure was separated from the rest by a wall with an arched opening or doorway. Although the entire building was of the Gallo-Roman period, the small chamber thus set off was found to contain a genuine dolmen, a roughly semicircular coarse stone slab, about two meters in diameter, which rested horizontally on three stones set up edgewise. Ashes and other evidences of fire were found under the dolmen in a rectangular foss or trench, which was lined on its four sides with dressed stones. A small room adjoining this structure on the south contained a similar dolmen. Near the first-mentioned dolmen were found many small bronze objects, probably ex-votos, including a head of Juno wearing a diadem, a remarkable bust of a Gallo-Roman woman of the first century, and a human leg.

M. Camille Jullian, the eminent authority on the history and antiquities of Gaul, attributed great importance to the discovery of these dolmens as evidence of the essential continuity of the history of the country from the period of the megalithic monuments to the time of the Roman Empire, and as proof that these emblematic stones might become objects of religious veneration.

¹⁰This inscription (Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum 13.11247) runs as follows:

DEO VCVETI
ET BERGVSIAE
REMVS PRIMI FI
DONAVIT
VSLM

Excavations made by Major Espérandieu and Dr. Epery in 1909-1911 at the eastern extremity of the plateau, near the spring, revealed the remains of the shrine of Apollo Moritasgus, evidently a Gallic spring-god who had become identified with Apollo. The great quantity of ex-votos discovered here shows that healing qualities were attributed to the water. Many of these offerings had the form of small *laminae* on which eyes were represented in dotted lines. The temple was a rectangular edifice flanked by porticoes. Near it were oratories and pools fed by the water of the spring.

Jullian, writing before the systematic excavations at Alesia had been made (*Histoire de la Gaule*, 2.244; Paris, Hachette, 1908), expressed the belief that the Gauls held Alesia in particular veneration. Its legends and its shrines, he thought, made the town a place of special sanctity. The results of the excavations justify his conjecture. Some of the Gallic cults evidently survived for a long time under Roman rule and were practised side by side with the worship of the Greco-Roman divinities. We may assume that great numbers of pilgrims sought relief from their physical ailments at the healing waters of Moritasgus, while worshippers thronged the sanctuary of the divine pair, Ucuētis and Bergusia, in the so-called Monument à Crypte, situated close to the forum and public buildings in the center of the town. All this is in keeping with a fundamental principle of policy of the Roman Empire, not to restrict the subject peoples in the practice of their native religious rites, so long as such practice did not lead to disorder or threaten the security of Roman rule.

We come now to the discoveries illustrating the last chapter of the history of Alesia, particularly the religious history of the town.

A short distance north of the entrance of the main field of excavations, between the modern road and the theater, and about fifty meters from the nearest part of the outside wall of the latter, the excavations of 1909 and 1910 brought to light a number of coarsely worked stone sarcophagi of a type characteristic of the Merovingian Period. Eleven of these sarcophagi were set parallel to one another, in rows from north to south, with quite narrow intervening spaces. Their eastern ends were in juxtaposition with a wall whose course is indicated by scanty remains of its foundations. Resuming operations at this point in 1913, the excavators found that the ends of this wall in both directions were indicated by single square stones, much larger than the rest, and nine meters apart. These appeared to be angle stones which, with the intervening section of foundation, represented the length of one side of a building. Running trenches eastward from these corners, the excavators discovered traces of the foundations of the north and the south walls respectively, and, at a distance of seventeen meters, two other angle stones, opposite the first two, representing the northeastern and the southeastern corners of the building. Remains of the foundation of the eastern wall were also uncovered. Although all these remains were two meters below the present level of the soil, they covered vestiges of a remoter period. Many of the stones used here appear to have been taken from earlier buildings. It should be

observed in particular that the north side of the building under discussion projected over the remains of a Roman street running east and west.

The entire interior of this building was laid bare in 1922-1923. Some remains of a coarse mosaic pavement of red terra cotta cubes mark the floor level. A number of stone sarcophagi remained in place inside the building. The most interesting was a large sarcophagus in the center of the room. It lies in the east and west axis of the building; its head is to the west. It was evidently sunk in the pavement, so that its lid rose only a little above the floor level. This sarcophagus is tapering in form; the lid in its length of 1.90 meters varies in width from 68 centimeters at the head to 33 at the foot. The height is 98 centimeters at the head, 69 at the foot. There is a round opening, or *fenestella*, about 37 centimeters in diameter, in the center of the lid.

Midway between this sarcophagus and the east wall were found the masonry remains of a pedestal or base, and near them a stone cross. On all sides but the west this building was enclosed by other structures which evidently formed with it a connected group. These adjoining structures also contained sarcophagi. Evidently the building described was an early Christian place of worship. The masonry base once supported the altar, and the sarcophagus in the middle of the floor contained the relics of the patron saint.

The excavations themselves give no clue to the identity of this saint. But certain documentary references to the early Christian tradition of the locality suggest a very probable conjecture. The *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*, or *Hieronymian Martyrology*¹¹, commemorates the birth of Saint Regina on the seventh day before the Ides of September (according to the *Codex Bernensis*), et in territorio Edua civitatis loco Alisia natalis S(an)cte Regine martyrae, (according to the *Codex Wissemburgensis*), et confinio Edua civitatis in Gallia locum Alisiane natalis Regine mar(t)yrae cuius gesta habentur.

The best authorities date the *Codex Bernensis* as not later than the death of Clotaire II (628 A. D.). It follows that the anniversary of a local saint, Regina, at Alesia, was celebrated as early as the first half of the seventh century. Her cult had probably existed there for several generations.

Different versions of the legend of Saint Regina are cited and discussed in the *Acta Sanctorum Septembris*, Tomus III, pages 24-38 (Antwerp, 1750), under the title, *De Sancta Regina Virgine Martyre prope Veterem Alesiam, ubi nunc est fanum Sanctae Reginae in ducatu Burgundiae*.

The general features of Saint Regina's story as gathered from the more common versions of the legend are as follows. Born in 236 A. D., she was a descendant of Vercassivellaunus, cousin of Vercingetorix, and the

¹¹A martyrology is a catalogue of martyrs and saints arranged according to the calendar. Martyrologies were at first local or provincial. Later, general martyrologies were formed by combination of local martyrologies. Of these the most famous is this Hieronymian, which was compiled in Italy in the second half of the fourth century, and erroneously attributed to St. Jerome. The existing manuscripts of this martyrology are based on a Gallican recension of about 600 A. D. The collection is published in the *Acta Sanctorum Novembris*, Tomi II Pars Prior (Brussels, 1894). The passage here referred to is on page 117 of that volume.

daughter of a certain Lucius Clementinus, or Clemens, a prominent citizen of Alesia, and landed proprietor of the district. Her mother died in giving her birth. She was brought up by a Christian nurse, and baptized. Clementinus, learning of his daughter's conversion, refused to receive her back into his house, and she became a shepherdess. One day the Governor, Olibrius, in passing saw Regina, then fifteen years of age, tending her sheep, and, since she was very beautiful, he fell in love with her, and, upon learning that she was free-born and of good family, wished to make her his wife. But when, confessing her faith, she was deaf alike to his entreaties and his threats, the Governor's love turned to rage, and he proceeded against her as a Christian. Since the most cruel and ingenious tortures failed to overcome her steadfastness, she was finally decapitated on the western slope of the plateau, outside Alesia. A spring with miraculous healing power gushed forth where her head fell on the ground¹².

Whether or not the details of this story are mainly legendary is a question that does not concern us. But the existence in this locality of the cult of Saint Regina from the early Middle Ages and the presence here of her reputed relics for a considerable period are well attested facts that have an important bearing on the study of the topography of Alesia.

The name of the modern village, Alise Sainte-Reine, is clearly derived from the observance of the cult of Saint Regina, as well as from the situation, in the vicinity, of the ancient town of Alesia. There is ample evidence for the existence of a Church of Saint Regina in Alesia, where her relics reposed for a considerable period, while there is none whatever for any other center of Christian worship in the town.

The relics of Saint Regina were carried later to Flavigny on the heights southeast of Alesia across the valley of the Ozerain. The *Lectiones* for the service of this saint, as celebrated in the Benedictine Abbey of Flavigny¹³, date back in their essential features to the ninth century. Their author states that his information regarding the translation of these relics he received from the mouth of Abbot Egil, under whom their removal took place. According to the *Lectiones*, the small Christian community at Alesia at the time of the martyrdom of Saint Regina buried her body, together with the fetter (*compes*) by which she had been bound, outside the town.

Long afterwards the place of interment, which had been forgotten, was revealed by the occurrence of many

miracles near it. Therefore, since Christianity had meanwhile triumphed, the remains of Saint Regina were disinterred and carried with great pomp and rejoicing into the town of Alesia, and placed in a stone sarcophagus of remarkable size (*sepulchrum lapideum mirae magnitudinis*), over which a Church was erected. The fame of many miracles occurring at this spot made the shrine and the tomb of Saint Regina a center of pilgrimages. When, later, the relics were removed to Flavigny, they were taken from the stone sarcophagus, which was left in its original position at Alesia.

Evidently, the remains of the supposed Church at Alesia with the great stone sarcophagus in the center answer perfectly, so far as their evidence goes, to the indications found in these *Lectiones*. It may be added that an orifice, or *fenestella*, such as is found in the lid of the sarcophagus, was not uncommon in tombs of saints, in order that worshippers might touch the relics, and, further, that a miniature fetter (*compes*) was discovered close to the sarcophagus, evidently an *ex-voto*, emblematic of the fetter buried with Saint Regina.

Records of the Flavigny Benedictine Abbey offer further information of importance in connection with the identification and the history of the Church at Alesia. From the *Annales Ordinis Sancti Benedicti*¹⁴ we learn that the wealthy Abbot Widrad, by two wills, executed at different dates, the earlier in 722 A. D., endowed the Benedictine Abbey of St. Préjet (Sanctus Praejectus) at Flavigny, of which he was the founder and the head, and bequeathed valuable possessions to the religious establishments (*basilicae aut abbatiae*) of Sanctus Andochius (St. Andoche) at Sidolocus (Saulieu), Sancta Regina (Sainte-Reine) at Alesia, and Sanctus Ferreolus (Saint-Ferréol) at Vesontio (Besançon), on condition that the last three, which were also under his patronage, should be subject to the first-named monastery.

From this it appears that a monastic establishment was already associated with the Church of Saint Regina

¹²The spring and the nearby shrine of Saint Regina (Sainte-Reine) have been visited throughout the centuries by pilgrims seeking physical and spiritual health. Sometimes during the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries the number of pilgrims reached 60,000 annually. The spring, chapel, and hospice are situated a little below the Musée Alesia, in the western part of the village of Alise Sainte-Reine. A sacred drama representing the legend of Saint Regina is enacted annually at Alise Sainte-Reine at the time of the festival of the saint in September. The text of this play has been published by Lépine: *Le Martyre de Sainte Reine, Drame Religieux en Trois Actes et en Vers* (Dijon, 1893).

¹³In this sense *Lectiones* are selections from the traditional narratives about the martyrs and the saints which were read aloud as 'Lessons' during the Divine Offices. I have been unable to consult the existing version of the Office of Saint Regina used at Flavigny, and am therefore entirely dependent on Professor Toutain for the evidence which it affords. His deductions from the *Lectiones* are published in his work, *Alesia Gallo-romaine et Chrétienne*, 128-135 (La Charité-sur-Loire, 1933).

¹⁴The edition of these *Annales* which I consulted in the New York Public Library (copies are rare in this country) is entitled *Annales Ordinis Sancti Benedicti Occidentalium Monachorum Patriarchae, Auctore Johanne Mabillon*. The six volumes of this edition appeared in Paris between 1703 and 1730. The information cited in this note is drawn from Volume III (Paris, 1704): <Page 64> Anno primo regni eius <Theodericus, or Thierry IV, 722 A. D.> Widradus abbas, filius Corbonis, industris viri, primum testamentum condidit pro monasterio Flaviniacensi, quod in Burgundiae pago Alexiensi < = Alisiensi > extruxit. . . . Widradus. . . duo condidit testamenta, unum prolixius, alterum brevius, quibus multas possessiones suas legat tribus basilicis, nempe Sancti Andochii Sedolocensi <Saint Andoche at Saulieu [Sidolocus in the earlier Latin of the Roman Empire]>, Sanctae Reginae Alisins seu Alexiensis <Saint Regina of Alesia>, et Sancti Perreoli <Saint Perréol of Besançon>, quas basilicas seu abbatias in titulum possidebat. Has vero donationes facit eo pacto ut rectores illarum basilicarum monasterium Flaviniacum, quod in honorem Sancti Praejecti in agro Burnacensi pagi Alisins condiderat, ejusque jura et instrumenta in omnibus conservare studeant, illudque constituit heredem reliquarum possessionum suarum. . . . <Pages 109-110>. . . . Egil, abbas Flaviniacensi monasterio. . . hoc anno <864 A. D.> de transferendo ex oppido Alexia Sanctae Reginae Virginis et Martyris corpore serio cogitare coepit. Accepta itaque ab Jona Aeduensi episcopo facultate hoc propositum exsequi maturavit. Triduano quippe fratribus indicto ieiunio, XII. Kalendas Aprilis, assumto secum Salocone episcopo, qui vices Jonae agebat, cum aliquot fratribus beatae martyris oratorium adiit, quod vix quinque passuum millibus Flaviniaco distat; sumto ligone sepulchrum, quod mirae magnitudinis erat, aperuit; tum, superjecto pallio, textit ad crastinum, totamque noctem ibidem pervigil in precibus duxit. Prima dein luce saxum tegmen, quod vix multorum boum annis trahi posset, facili negotio removit; dein corpus sacrum in paratum feretrum componit, ac sollemni pompa, comitante cum fratribus Salocone episcopo et innumera promiscui populi ac sexus multitudine, in Flaviniacense monasterium deducit, ubi honorifice conditum est. . . .

at Alesia at the time of Widrad's bequests. Therefore it is interesting to note that the supposed place of Christian worship discovered in Alesia shows vestiges of connected buildings or apartments, forming with it a compact group, such as might have sheltered a community of monks. All this is added evidence that it corresponds to the Church of St. Regina mentioned in the documents which we have been considering.

The annals of the Benedictine Order inform us, furthermore, that in 864 A. D. Abbot Egil, with the sanction of the diocesan authority, transferred the relics of Saint Regina from the Church at Alesia to his own abbey at Flavigny 'scarcely five miles distant', leaving the great stone sarcophagus in its original position¹⁸.

Assuming, then, on the basis of the evidence here collected, that the building in Alesia here under discussion was the Church of St. Regina, we may proceed to summarize briefly the ascertainable information about the circumstances of her local cult that bear upon the topography of the place. At some period after the triumph of Christianity, but before (probably a long time before) the drawing up of Widrad's will in 722 A. D. the supposed relics of St. Regina were brought into Alesia and placed in a great stone sarcophagus, which occupied a position in the center of the subsequent rectangular Church edifice. A monastic establishment was connected with the Church, and was probably accommodated in quarters adjoining it. Of this establishment vestiges, it is quite possible, have been uncovered. In 864 A. D., Egil, Abbot of the Flavigny Monastery, which had jurisdiction over the religious community at Alesia, transferred the relics of Saint

Regina to his own Church. Long before this, however, the former considerable urban population of Alesia had probably almost entirely disappeared, leaving no adequate local force of able-bodied men to guarantee the protection of the precious relics in that turbulent period when the Northmen on their raids penetrated far into the interior of the country along the watercourses. At the time of the establishment of the Parish Church in what is now the village of Alise Sainte-Reine the center of the remaining population had doubtless shifted from the surface of the plateau to its southwestern slope. This Parish Church is dedicated to St. Légér (Leudegarius), Bishop of Autun, and, inasmuch as he died in 678 A. D., there is some reason to suppose that it was established in the last part of the seventh or the first part of the eighth century. But it is difficult to believe that the old-time social and industrial activity of the Gallo-Roman community of Alesia still existed when the Church of Saint Regina was founded in the heart of the town, so near the theater and other public buildings, and the center of affairs, and the ground around it became a coveted place of interment. In view of the paucity of archaeological material at Alesia that can be attributed to the later Empire, I am inclined to believe that the industrial and commercial prosperity of Alesia ceased during the barbarian inroads and other calamities of the second half of the third century, after which the buildings probably fell for the most part into decay, while the remnant of the population huddled about the shrine and the relics of Saint Regina, their chief moral mainstay, until the removal of these tokens destroyed the last tie that held the inhabitants to the spot, and the plateau was abandoned to the state of solitude which, interrupted only by casual visits of husbandman and shepherd, lasted until the grating notes of the spade called forth the phantom spectacle of the age-long teeming life, so long extinct.

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¹⁸The date of the translation of the relics of Saint Regina is confirmed by a passage in the *Chronicon Hugonis*, as published in the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, as edited by Pertz, 8.355 (Hanover, 1848): Anno ab inc. Dom. DCCCLXIV translatus est corpus Sanctae Reginae virginis et martiris de Alesia civitate apud Flaviniacum castrum seu cenobium, praesidente loco eidem, cuius erat iuris civitas praefata, Aigilo <Saint Egil> abbate, postmodum Senonum archiepiscopo, regnante Carolo Calvo.